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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001099

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KISL](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: FADHILA ON THE PCNS, PROSPECTS FOR RECONCILIATION  
WITH THE GOI, AND SADRIST DIALOGUE

REF: BAGHDAD 1020

Classified By: Political Counselor Matt Tueller for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. 1. (C) Summary: In a meeting held at the COR on Monday, April 7, Dr. Basim Sharif al-Hechaimi of Fadhila shared his views on the current crisis between the GOI and the Sadrists, including Fadhila's participation in the Political Council for National Security (PCNS) meeting held on Saturday evening, April 5, prospects for a reconciliation with the Prime Minister, and Fadhila's offer to facilitate dialogue between the Embassy and Sadrism leaders. Commenting on the current crisis, Dr. Basim posited that "we are at war," condemning JAM and their actions as well as those of other militias in Iraq. Discussing his participation in last Saturday's PCNS, Dr. Basim remarked that he was genuinely pleased with the meeting, but he would have liked to have seen a more explicit condemnation of Iran's interference in Iraqi affairs. When pressed about Fadhila's previous offer to facilitate dialogue between the Embassy and the Sadrists, Dr. Basim stated that he would try, but that Muqtada as-Sadr's recent declarations against contact with the CF had scared many Sadrists away. Reflecting on his party's relationship with the PM and the GOI, Dr. Basim ducked responsibility, complaining that Dawa and ISCI, not Fadhila, are responsible for the deterioration of relations. At the same time, he hinted that Fadhila would like to return to the government. End Summary.

Do They Want To Come In?

¶2. (C) Poloff began the meeting by thanking Fadhila for participating in the PCNS and their display of support for the GOI, adding that he expected their actions would reflect the public statements that they had recently issued condemning armed militias. Poloff also expressed disappointment in Fadhila's previous lack of support for the PM and GOI, noting that less than two weeks ago the party had seriously flirted with joining the Sadrists in a no-confidence vote against the PM. Stating that he was pleased that Fadhila did not act on this, he hoped that Fadhila would continue to behave responsibly and remain supportive of the GOI. Dr. Basim responded that Fadhila was sincere in its support for the GOI, and held up their participation in last Sunday night's PCNS, as well as their strong support of the statement issued after the meeting as examples of their sincerity. He noted that as a moderate Islamic party, Fadhila supports a strong, central government and has always worked within the system, and cited Governor Waeli's legal challenge to the PM's previous attempt to dismiss him as evidence of this fact.

¶3. (C) As further proof of Fadhila's willingness to support the GOI, Dr. Basim stated that his party had drafted a policy paper for President Talabani, in which his party called for more proportional representation in the PCNS. In this paper, Fadhila also suggested that in this time of

crisis, the PM should fill the vacant cabinet posts as quickly as possible to ensure the efficacy of the GOI. While not calling for a complete cabinet reshuffle, he did state that the ministerial positions should be allocated on a proportional basis, as reflected by the party composition of the COR. He also hinted to Fadhila's willingness to participate in the government, stating that based on their size, they deserve to be in the government and they could play a positive and productive role in the GOI.

¶4. (C) During this exchange, Dr. Basim also remarked on the importance of the PCNS and the statement that was released, but added that he wished the document had included a more specific condemnation of Iran's interference in Iraqi affairs. He added, however, that not all of Iran's activities in Iraq are negative, and that Iran plays an important economic and commercial role in Iraq and could also play an important political role. He also commented that the Sadrists had been isolated during the PCNS, and he felt their insistence on maintaining JAM was a big mistake. He added that it was important for the GOI to keep the population calm, to which PolOff commented that meetings such as last Saturday's PCNS, in which the participants exhibited unity and support for the GOI, go a long way towards calming the people.

Or Stay Out?  
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¶5. (C) Unable to restrain himself, Dr. Basim returned to his familiar laundry list of complaints against the PM and GOI, complaining that the PM behaved like the head of a party, not the head of state, and that political reform was necessary but probably unlikely. When told that the PM's

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recent action against the militias in Basrah and Sadr City appeared to be the actions of a national leader, not a party boss, Dr. Basim backpedaled. Agreeing that it was important to confront the militias, he countered that JAM was Dawa's creation, and that for a long time both Jaafari and Maliki closed their eyes to JAM's excesses. Though acknowledging that the PM's campaign against the militias was a positive development, Dr. Basim said that eradicating the militias would take a long time and a lot of resources. He also admitted that Fadhila fears that ISCI and Dawa also want to get rid of Fadhila, particularly in Fadhila's stronghold of Basrah, and he believes that the PM will attempt to marginalize Fadhila before the provincial elections. When told that Fadhila's past actions have been dangerous and obstructionist, and had led many to question Fadhila's intentions, Dr. Basim repeated his claim that Fadhila wants to work with the GOI. In response, Poloff told Dr. Basim that public statements of support for the GOI and condemnations of militias and militia violence, as well as positive actions, would go a long way towards proving that sincerity.

Sadrist Dialogue  
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¶6. (C) Asked about the likelihood of Fadhila serving as an intermediary between the Embassy and the Sadrists, an offer that the Fadhila member had put forth in a previous meeting, Dr. Basim acknowledged that it might be difficult now, especially since Muqtada as-Sadr has forbidden his party members to talk to CF. That said, Dr. Basim stated that he would do what he could to bring the parties together, adding that given the sensitivity of the issue, meetings might have to be done in secret and outside the country.

¶7. (C) Comment: Though Fadhila's participation in the recent PCNS and support for the statement that was issued after the meeting were welcome developments, it remains to be seen whether they are fully behind the GOI, or if this was merely an act of political expediency. Given their history,

Fadhila's words will need to be backed up by actions if their newfound support for the GOI is to be believed. End Comment.  
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